

Town Manager Report

Town of Lunenburg- October 3, 2023





Contact Information

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Meetings, Events, and Other Announcements:

- The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new ADA Patio at the Adult Activity Center is on Wednesday, October 11th at 12 PM, Rain or Shine.
- Halloween Trick or Treating will be Tuesday, October 31st from 6-8 PM.
- The Special Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14th at 7 PM at the MS/HS Auditorium. The Finance Committee will hold their Public Hearing on the articles on Thursday, October 12th at 7 PM in the Town Hall meeting room.

Board/Committee/Commission Vacancies:

The following is a list of current vacancies on the following boards/committees/commissions:

- Architectural Preservation District Commission (1 vacancy)
- Cemetery Commission (1 vacancy until the next Annual Town Election)
- Finance Committee (2 vacancies)
- Green Communities Committee (1 Regular Member and 1 Associate vacancy)
- Open Space Committee (1 Member at Large vacancy)
- Personnel Committee (1 vacancy)

Interested persons can find Volunteer Applications on the Town Website and completed forms can be sent to the Select Board's Office. Anyone that has any questions on volunteer opportunities can contact the Select Board's Office at (978) 582-4130 x 144.

Employment Opportunities with the Town:

The following is a list of current employment opportunities with the Town:

- Assistant to the Sewer Business Manager (19 hours/week)
- Assistant Town Accountant (32 hours/week)
- Assistant Meal Site Manager (19.5 hours/week)
- Conservation Administrator (36 hours/week)
- Facilities Superintendent (40 hours/week)
- Finance Director (40 hours/week- contractual)
- Heavy Equipment Operators (40 hours/week)
- Land Use Director (40 hours/week)
- Principal Assessor (40 hours/week)
- Seasonal Cemetery Laborers
- Videographer (2-10 hours/week)

More information on each position can be found on the website under job opportunities, which are located on the town website.

Update on Certification of Property Values Project with Vision Government Solutions

Last week there was a kickoff meeting with Mike Tarello of Vision, our consultant Nate Cramer of MFS, the Interim Principal Assessor Rena Swezey, and myself. We discussed the timeline for the project, updates to the Board of Assessors, and next steps. Vision is finishing up a number of other projects right now so the first phase of sales analysis and verification will begin around mid-October but will still be complete according to the timetable in their bid. As part of the sales analysis and verification process, Mike Tarello will review the Sales file and the Town will send any sales verification forms we receive to Vision. Vision would like to meet with the Board of Assessors in mid-October to explain the process and answer questions. We also discussed getting information out as early as possible and throughout the process so taxpayers would be aware of what to expect and be part of positive public relations.

Community Compact Best Practices Grant Application

I applied for the Community Compact Best Practices Grant last week. Towns can apply for up to two "Best Practices", which are outlined in the state's program guidelines. The two best practices I requested funding for were:

- 1) Financial Management category to utilize the services of the Collins Center to create a comprehensive package of financial management policies, financial procedures manual and a memorandum detailing any additional findings and recommendations regarding financial structure and general administrative practices. This request was for \$30,000.
- 2) Resilient and Reliable Transportation category to create a multi-year asset management plan that inventories and rates the condition of our bridges and culverts. This request was for \$25,000.

Both of these projects are part of my FY24 goals, as they will be extremely valuable to the Town once completed. As we are all aware, having written policies and procedures identify laws and regulations that need to be complied with, provide guidelines for financial decision making, and outlines for internal processes that should be followed by all stakeholders. The additional value of this best practice would be the inclusion of a high-level review of the overall management structure and recommendations for improvements that will address prior year annual audit comments, a Financial Management Review done by the Department of Revenue in 2008, and will address questions about financial management structure in light of this past year's tax assessment issues.

The second best practice will be critical information we are lacking in our capital planning process right now and overall long term planning. We have 26 bridges and large culverts and we do not have a corresponding management plan of when they need to be repaired or replaced or the associated costs. To give an idea of the financial impact, we have approximately \$900,000 in local funds and the Small Bridge Grant funds to reconstruct the Flat Hill Road culvert. The end product will be similar to our Pavement Management Plan with an inventory assessment, priority rankings, and estimated costs.

Invitation for Bids/Request for Proposals:

- Bids for the Public Safety Carport Project were due on September 20th and we received one bid from Diversified Construction Services for \$517,918. When this project was put out to bid in June of 2021, we received two bids and the low bid was \$298,750. We currently have \$135,000 in the FY21 Capital Plan appropriation, thus both bids far exceed the available funds for this project. After speaking with both the Police Chief and Facilities Director, we all agree that we will not be pursuing this project and I will be requesting these funds be re-appropriated at a future town meeting.
- Bids for the Two DPW Trucks were due yesterday and we received one bid from Minuteman Trucks LLC for 2 F750 trucks totaling \$481,975 (not including trade in values for the decommissioned trucks. This amount is equivalent to what was committed through ARPA funding. We will be putting the decommissioned trucks on Municibid to see if we can receive more than the trade in value for the trucks and then will award the bid based on those results. Also, the anticipated delivery date by Minuteman is on or before June 30, 2024.
- The DPW Director had Mayer Tree Service remove 15 years of accumulated brush from the yard waste area at the capped landfill site as there was no room for more brush. They performed the work under the State Contract for Solid Waste and Recycling Services Category 10: Organic--Leaves, Yard Waste, & Floating Vegetation and Category 17: Wood.

Route 2A/Chase Road/ Electric Ave/Lunenburg Crossing intersections:

VHB held a kickoff meeting for the Road Safety Audit (RSA) on Thursday, September 28, 2023 at 10 AM at the Public Safety Building. The meeting was attended by the Town Manager, Police Chief, Fire Chief, DPW Director, engineers from VHB, engineers from MassDOT District 3 and engineers from MassDOT Headquarters. The issues with the two intersections were discussed. A field investigation was conducted. Then repair and mitigation solutions were discussed. A write up of proposed solutions will be forthcoming at a date unknown.

Employee Highlights:

- This weekend different staff members participated in fundraising events for different causes. COA Director Sue Doherty, the Outreach Coordinator Pauline Roy, and Diane Nowd of the Council on Aging participated in the Alzheimer's Walk In Worcester. The name of their team was the Lunenburg Purple Turtles and the money they raised goes to the Alzheimer's Association. Police Chief Gammel participated with other Massachusetts Chiefs in the Jimmy Fund Walk this weekend. The name of their team was "Team Police Chiefs" and the money they raised goes to support cancer research and patient care at Dana-Farber. Thank you to the employees recognized here and those that we are unaware of participating in causes like these.
- The Economic Development Committee Public Official Meet and Greet was on Thursday, September 28th and there was a great turnout. Thank you to Low Places Ranch for opening up their beautiful location for the event, Joe Gilchrest and the Economic Development for putting the event together, Lunenburg business owners, staff and committee members for attending. For staff, the DPW Director Bill Bernard, Fire Chief Pat Sullivan, BOH Administrative Assistant Andrea Schnepf, Planning Board Administrative Assistant Annie Aubrey, Conservation Administrative Assistant Ashleigh Denio, Building Commissioner Brian Gingras, Executive Assistant Elaine Peterson and IT Administrative Assistant Kara McCarthy for making the time to attend and connect with our local business owners.

